

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application in view of the following remarks. This response is believed to fully address all issues raised in the outstanding Office Action mailed April 21, 2005. Furthermore, no new matter is believed to have been introduced hereby.

Claims 1, 11, 19, and 21 have been amended as detailed above. Also, claims 9-10, 15, and 17 have been cancelled without prejudice. Accordingly, claims 1-8, 11-14, 16, and 18-21 remain pending.

Outstanding Rejections

Claims 1-3, 8-13, and 15-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,464,200 to Nakazato et al. (hereinafter "the '200 patent") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,104,117 to McCormick et al. (hereinafter "the '117 patent"). Claims 4, 5-7, and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over the '200 patent in view of the '117 patent, and respectively further in view of U.S. Patent Nos. 5,098,074; 5,920,758; and 6,428,000. Each of these rejections is fully addressed below.

CLAIMS 1-8 AND 18-19

Without limiting the scope of the invention, to make typographical changes and in an effort to impart precision to the claims (e.g., by more particularly pointing out the invention, rather than to avoid prior art), independent claim 1 has been amended as detailed above.

It is respectfully submitted that the cited art, alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the claimed combination of features such as set forth in the amended claim 1. According, claim 1 is in condition for allowance.

In particular, the outstanding Office Action indicates that the '200 patent, in column 6, lines 30-52, as relied upon incorrectly in previous Office Actions mailed on October 20, 2004, and January 12, 2005, "describes a user entering a print command and an ID number which the system then uses to identify a particular bin corresponding to that ID number and deposit the printed output in that bin." See, e.g., the outstanding Office Action, paragraph 6, on page 6.

This language seems to suggest that the '200 patent is capable of depositing the printed output in a selected bin based on the ID. For the Examiner's ease of reference, column 6, lines 30-52, of the '200 patent are reproduced below:

The network control unit 44 controls the network 42 at all times and has a network monitoring function and a function of sending messages to the terminal units 40. A particular ID number is assigned to each terminal unit 40. When a user enters a print command meant for the printer 11 on the terminal unit 40, an ID number is entered together with print or image information. When printings should be distributed to a particular user, a destination ID number is entered together with print information. The sheets or printings coming out of the printer 11 are transported to the sheet storing device 11 in the previously stated manner. If any one of the bins 16 is empty, the sheets are distributed to and stored in the empty bin 16. At this instant, the number assigned to the empty bin and the entered ID number are stored in combination. When another print command is entered afterwards, the resulting sheets are delivered to another empty bin in the same manner as the previous sheets. Subsequently, the users entered print commands or to whom the sheets stacks are addressed each enters an ID number on the device 10 by, for example, passing an ID card through a card reader. Then, the device 10 identifies a bin corresponding to the ID number and opens the lower gate 23 of that bin.

The '200 patent, column 6, lines 30-52. Emphasis Added.

As partially mentioned by the Office Action, this cited section indicates that the ID number of the '200 patent is used to "identify" the bin

corresponding to the ID. However, the cited section in no way suggests that the '200 patent is capable of depositing the printed output in a selected bin (the bin corresponding to the ID), as claimed by the outstanding Office Action. As stated in previous responses, the '200 patent deposits the outputs to empty trays. *See, e.g., the '200 patent at column 5, lines 50-66.* Thus, the ID of the '200 patent is not utilized for depositing the print output in bins at all. Rather, the ID is used to open a gate such that the user can access a single fence (32) receiving the output of the given. *See, e.g., Fig. 2 of the '200 patent.*

Moreover, the Office Action correctly points out that the '200 patent "does not explicitly teach individual user access to a specific tray holding printed output" on page 2 of the outstanding Office Action. Accordingly, there is no disagreement between the Office and applicant that users of the '200 patent will not have individual user access to the bins of the '200 patent, and the ID of the '200 patent does not change this fact.

Accordingly, contrary to the Office's assertion, the cited section of the '200 patent fails to teach or suggest that the "printed output is deposited to a specific one of said plurality of output surfaces responsive to a selection."

In rejecting claims 19 and 21, the Office asserts that this same section (column 6, lines 30-52) teaches the function "selected from a group comprising copying, faxing and printing." *See, page 3 of the outstanding Office Action.* First, the words "copying" or "faxing" are not even mentioned in this section. Second, as indicated by the amended claim 1, the selection may be "a selection corresponding to a function of said printing device communicating said printed output." The '200 patent can not simply be used to teach this recitation when it merely mentions the words. As claim 1 recites, the "printed output is deposited

to a specific one of said plurality of output surfaces responsive to a selection.”
Upon reviewing the ’200 patent, the undersigned has failed to find any support for rejection of claims 19 and 21.

Additionally, the Office Action on page 2 relies on a newly cited reference (the ’117 patent) to teach a plurality of output trays in which sheets are directed and deposited in specifically identified receiving trays. The ’117 patent, however, fails to teach or suggest the claimed recitation that the “selection is one of a user-selection or a selection corresponding to a function of said printing device communicating said printed output.”

For the Examiner’s ease of reference, the cited portion of the ’117 patent, i.e., column 5, lines 22-28, is reproduced below:

The tray assembly may function as a "mailbox system", allowing designated sheets to be directed and deposited in specifically identified receiving trays, whereupon they may be removed by the recipient. Individual, lockable doors may be used to restrict unauthorized removal or inspection of the contents of designated receiving trays.

The ’117 patent, column 5, lines 22-28. Emphasis Added.

As can be readily seen, this portion of the ’117 patent fails to teach or suggest that the “selection is one of a user-selection or a selection corresponding to a function of said printing device communicating said printed output.” Upon reviewing the ’117 patent, the undersigned was unable to find any support for teaching or suggesting the above recitation of claim 1. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is in condition for allowance.

Claims 2-8 and 18-19 depend from claim 1 and should be allowable for at least similar reasons, as well as additional or alternative elements that are recited therein but not shown in the cited prior art.

CLAIMS 11-14, 16, AND 20-21

Without limiting the scope of the invention, to make typographical changes and in an effort to impart precision to the claims (e.g., by more particularly pointing out the invention, rather than to avoid prior art), independent claim 11 has been amended as detailed above.

As amended, claim 11 in part recites that the "printed output is deposited to a specific one of said plurality of output trays responsive to a selection to provide individual user access to said specific one of said plurality of output trays, wherein said selection is one of a user-selection or a selection corresponding to a function of said printing device communicating said printed output." As discussed with reference to claim 1, the cited references, alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the claimed combination of features such as set forth in the amended claim 11. According, claim 11 is in condition for allowance.

Claims 12- 14, 16, and 20-21 depend from claim 11 and should be allowable for at least similar reasons, as well as additional or alternative elements that are recited therein but not shown in the cited prior art.

Conclusion

Reconsideration and allowance of all claims is respectfully requested.
The Examiner is urged to telephone the undersigned if that would expedite prosecution of the application.

Respectfully Submitted,

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By His Representatives,

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